

Health of Home and School.

LEAFLET NO. 3.

ISSUED BY THE STATE BOARD OF HEALTH OF MAINE.

Parasites and Parasitic Diseases of the Skin.

This leaflet is prepared for the purpose of helping parents promptly to get rid of some of the parasites which the most frequently trouble school children,—particularly lice and the mite that causes itch. Both are quickly and easily gotten rid of if the caretakers of the children are watchful, and prompt measures are taken if the affliction occurs.

Head lice.

Head lice may promptly be destroyed with common kerosene. Pour a little into a small dish. Moisten a small rag with it. After squeezing the rag somewhat, moisten the hair with the kerosened rag. Do this in the afternoon, after the return from school, or in the evening. Before morning, the oil will have evaporated so that but little or no odor will remain; or it can be removed with soap and water. If it is wished to disguise the odor of the kerosene, pour a small quantity of kerosene into a vial, and pour one-fourth as much oil of sassafras in with it, or a smaller quantity. Shake a few times until there is a complete mixture.

Or, dip a small, clean hair-brush into kerosene oil or oil of sassafras poured into a shallow dish. Then brush and moisten the hair with it. An ounce or two of oil of sassafras costs but little. After any of these applications are made to the head, be very careful not to let the children go near fire or lights. For the night, cover the head with a cap or wrap a cloth around the head. A cap can be improvised by knotting the corners of a handkerchief. This treatment should be repeated several times to ensure complete destruction of the lice and nits. Applied as recommended, the kerosene is not in any way injurious to the scalp or the hair.

Body lice.

They must be killed by scalding the underclothing and the bed sheets and the blankets, following up this practice several times at short intervals if necessary. Clothing may be rid of these insect parasites or of other kinds, by fumigation with sulphur.

The Itch.

This disease is caused by the itch mite, which causes the trouble by burrowing under the surface of the outer skin. The cure of the disease is merely a matter of killing this parasite. The trouble can be cured by using one of the following preparations:

Balsam of Peru,

Lard,—take equal parts.

In a shallow plate with a steel table knife rub them together thoroughly, forming an ointment. Vaseline may be used in place of lard, still better, lanolin.

Flowers of sulphur, one tablespoonful,

Balsam of Peru, two tablespoonfuls,

Lard or vaseline, eight tablespoonfuls.

Mix and make an ointment.

With the palm of the hand rub one of these ointments thoroughly into every part of the body from the neck downward, or, at least, all parts of the body which are affected. Sometimes the only affected parts are, at first, the hands and the arms to the elbows.

To make sure work, particularly in bad cases, two or three applications should be made within twenty-four or thirty-six hours.

Just before the first anointing, the whole body should have a thorough scrubbing with soap and hot water. Dry the body well before the ointment is rubbed in. The same kind of a bath should be given twelve hours or so after the last application. Thorough scrubbing and cleanliness will of itself go a long way toward curing.

To avoid reinfection, a child must have clean clothes, particularly underclothing, and a change of sheets and blankets. If but one change can be made, it should be made at the time of the last soap and water bath.

In the ordinary process of washing, the itch-mite on all clothing will be destroyed when an abundance of soap is used and the water is near the boiling point when the clothing is soaking.

The old-fashioned ointment of sulphur and lard will cure, but it is unpleasant, more irritating and less rapidly curative than balsam of Peru. Pure balsam of Peru is sometimes painted on, or a good mixture is with glycerin half and half. To make them mix, fill a bottle half full, heat by putting the bottle in pretty hot water, then shake.

Ringworm.

Another contagious skin disease which sometimes makes trouble in schools is ringworm. It presents the appearance of a round patch, covered with fine scales and with a slightly raised, reddish ring around it or part of it. The advice of the family physician should be obtained, and his treatment should be followed carefully. When ringworm gets into the hairy scalp, its cure is difficult and prolonged treatment may be required.

Contagious impetigo.

When on the exposed surfaces, particularly on the face, hands or wrists, a simple looking pimple or pustule, enlarges in size and the patch becomes covered by a brownish or yellowish crust, and other patches have apparently been caused by the conveyance of infection by the fingers or otherwise from the original patch, medical advice should be taken. Contagious impetigo is sometimes rapidly spread in the schools, but it can be promptly cured by medical treatment.